CDC
STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
No 32
STRANGE
SUSPENSE STORIES
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
10¢
A CHARLTON PUBLICATION
S. DITKO
THROUGH THE PAINTING INTO
"A WORLD OF HIS OWN"

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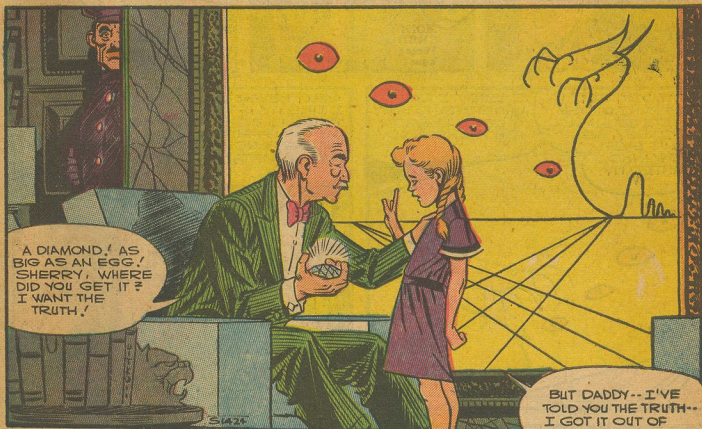
HENDRIX HAD STUMBLED ONTO SOMETHING WHICH COULD MAKE HIM THE RICHEST MAN ON EARTH! BUT HE NEVER EXPECTED TO BE SO RICH THAT HE WOULD HAVE....

A WORLD OF HIS OWN

HOW ABOUT IT, SHERRY? DOES DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL THINK IT'S PRETTY?
OH, DADDY, YES! IT'S LIKE ANOTHER WORLD! LIKE FAIRY-LAND!

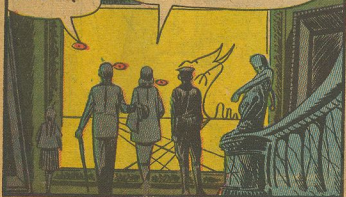
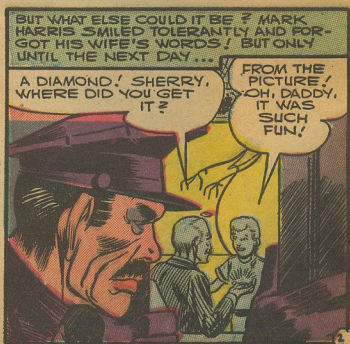
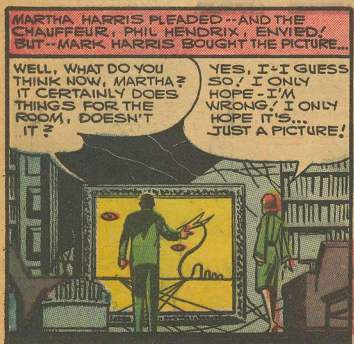
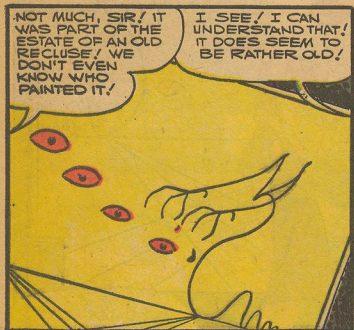
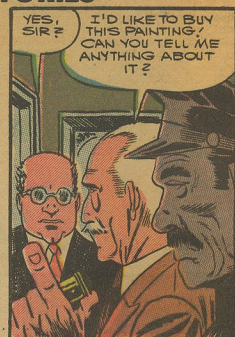
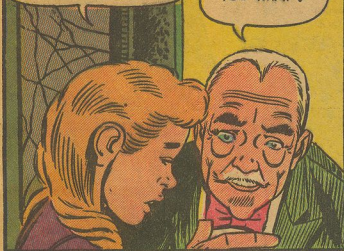
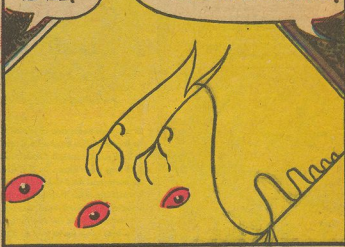
FAIRYLAND? NO, THE PAINTING WAS NOT A PAINTING OF FAIRYLAND-- BUT SHERRY HARRIS WAS HALF RIGHT! ONLY, NO ONE KNEW IT, THEN...
PLEASE, MARK, DON'T BUY IT! IT-- IT MAKES ME FEEL COLD, SOME-HOW!
NONSENSE! SHERRY LIKES IT, AND SO DO I! SO IT'S SETTLED!

YES, SIR?
I'D LIKE TO BUY THIS PAINTING! CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

NOT MUCH, SIR! IT WAS PART OF THE ESTATE OF AN OLD RECLUSE! WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO PAINTED IT!
I SEE! I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT! IT DOES SEEM TO BE RATHER OLD!

WELL, NEVER MIND! I LIKE IT! IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT, MY CHAUFFEUR WILL ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION!
SURE-- YOU'RE PAYING ME! YOU MAY AS WELL GET YOUR MONEY'S WORTH, EH?

MARTHA HARRIS PLEADED--AND THE CHAUFFEUR, PHIL HENDRIX, ENVIED! BUT--MARK HARRIS BOUGHT THE PICTURE...
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK NOW, MARTHA? IT CERTAINLY DOES THINGS FOR THE ROOM, DOESN'T IT?
YES, I-I GUESS SO! I ONLY HOPE-I'M WRONG! I ONLY HOPE IT'S... JUST A PICTURE!

BUT WHAT ELSE COULD IT BE? MARK HARRIS SMILED TOLERANTLY AND FORGOT HIS WIFE'S WORDS! BUT ONLY UNTIL THE NEXT DAY...
A DIAMOND! SHERRY, WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
FROM THE PICTURE! OH, DADDY, IT WAS SUCH FUN!

LAST NIGHT, WHILE YOU WERE UPSTAIRS, I WAS LOOKING AT THE PICTURE AND ALL OF A SUDDEN IT... IT WAS LIKE A DOORWAY! I JUST STEPPED IN!
YOU WHAT?
SHERRY--TRY TO UNDERSTAND, THIS DIAMOND IS VERY VALUABLE! SO THIS IS NO TIME FOR MAKE-BELIEVE! WHERE DID YOU REALLY GET IT!
BUT I'VE TOLD YOU! FROM THE PICTURE! DADDY, IT'S THE TRUTH! THERE ARE LOTS OF PRETTY RED STONES LIKE THAT ONE! ALL COLORS!

A CHILD, AND A FAIRY TALE! AT FIRST, MARK HARRIS DID NOT BELIEVE... BUT THERE WERE TO BE OTHER NIGHTS...
ANOTHER ONE! A RUBY, THIS TIME! AND SHE KEEPS TELLING THE SAME STORY! MARK, I'M AFRAID!
AND SO AM I! IT CAN'T BE TRUE! BUT IF IT ISN'T, WHERE IS SHE GETTING THE STONES?
IT'S GOT TO BE JUST A STORY! IT'S GOT TO BE!
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE A STORY, MARK? THE STONES ARE REAL! WHAT IF THERE IS... ANOTHER WORLD BEYOND THAT PAINTING?

THERE CAN'T BE! GO TO BED! I-I'VE GOT TO THINK! HYSTERICS WON'T GET US ANYWHERE! I'LL WORK THIS OUT... SOMEHOW!
SOMEHOW? BUT HOW? HOW DOES A MAN THINK CLEARLY--WHEN IN HIS HEART HE IS TERRIFIED?

A DOORWAY--TO ANOTHER WORLD! IT CAN'T BE! IT JUST CAN'T BE...

Boys! Girls! Men! Women!

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Easily and Quickly in Your Spare Time

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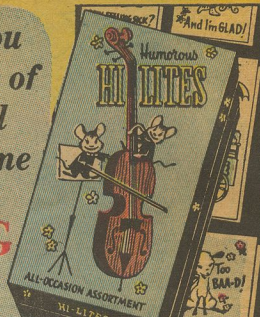
HI-LITES
HUMOROUS ASSORTMENT
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Terrific designs that tickle the funny bone, in new smart TALL shape, delightfully decorated with sequins, glitter, flocking. The gayest and cleverest cards ever created.

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Everyone falls in love with these new greeting cards instantly. Let our new-idea Assortments make more money FOR YOU than ever before in spare time. See how wonderfully easy it is to sell greeting cards which *say in the modern manner* what's in the sender's heart for Birthdays, Anniversaries, Get Well, Baby-Births, and many other occasions.

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See for yourself! Don't send a penny. Mail coupon for the 2 assortments shown here, sent you on approval, all postage paid. We'll include FREE Illustrated Catalog and details of our amazingly simple Money-Making Plan. Mail the coupon TODAY!

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On Your Anniversary!

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Name ____________________

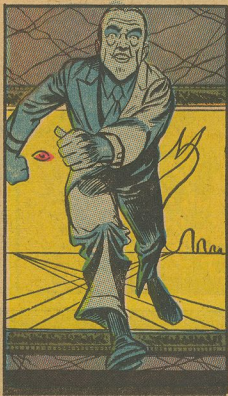
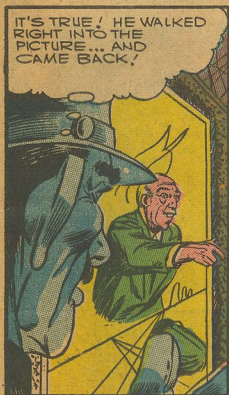
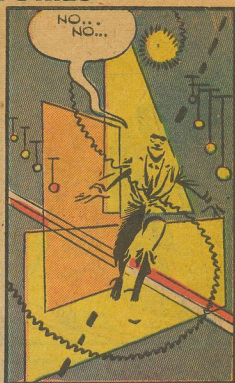
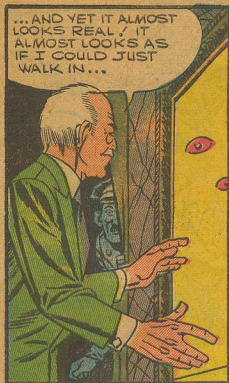
Address ____________________

City ____________ State ________

If writing for an organization, give its name ____________________

...AND YET IT ALMOST LOOKS REAL! IT ALMOST LOOKS AS IF I COULD JUST WALK IN...

NO... NO...

IT'S TRUE! HE WALKED RIGHT INTO THE PICTURE... AND CAME BACK!

MARK HARRIS FLED -- TERRIFIED! BUT THERE WAS SOMEONE ELSE... A MAN WHO WAS NOT AFRAID. WHO ENVIED MARK HARRIS.

I DID IT! I'M THERE! THE PICTURE IS A DOORWAY!

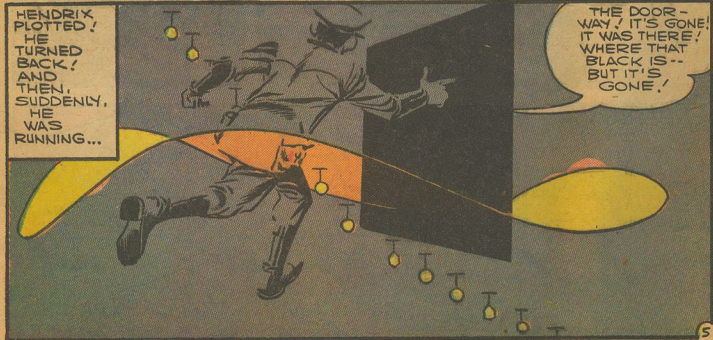
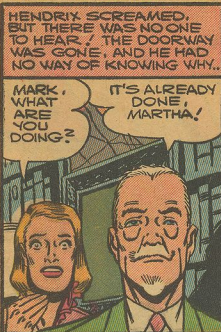
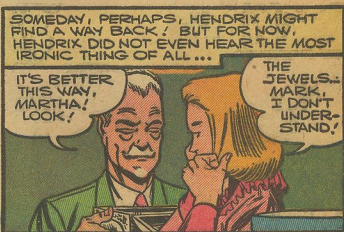
I'M RICH... RICH!

RUBIES, DIAMONDS... I CAN HAVE ANYTHING--ANYTHING!

FOR A LITTLE WHILE PHIL HENDRIX WENT HALF MAD WITH GREED! BUT THEN, REASON RETURNED...
THIS COULD BE MINE... ALL OF IT, IF ONLY THE PAINTING WERE MINE!

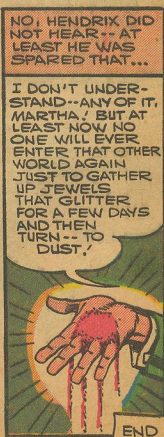
I'LL TAKE IT... ONCE I HAVE IT, THEY'LL NEVER FIND ME! SOUTH AMERICA HERE I COME!

EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GET THIS PAINTING!

HENDRIX PLOTTED! HE TURNED BACK! AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE WAS RUNNING...
THE DOORWAY! IT'S GONE! IT WAS THERE! WHERE THAT BLACK IS-- BUT IT'S GONE!

SOMEDAY, PERHAPS, HENDRIX MIGHT FIND A WAY BACK! BUT FOR NOW, HENDRIX DID NOT EVEN HEAR THE MOST IRONIC THING OF ALL...

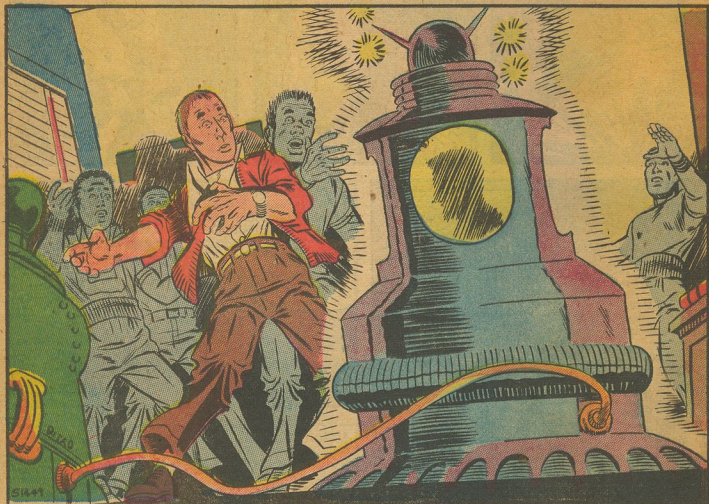
IT'S BETTER THIS WAY, MARTHA! LOOK!

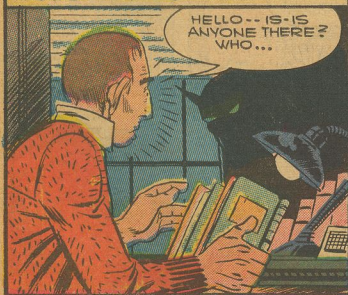
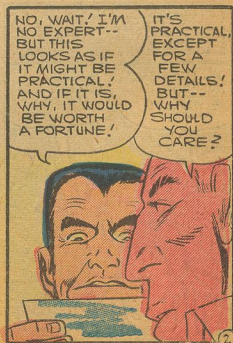
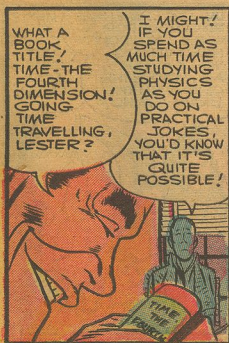
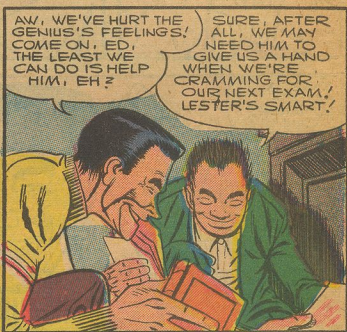
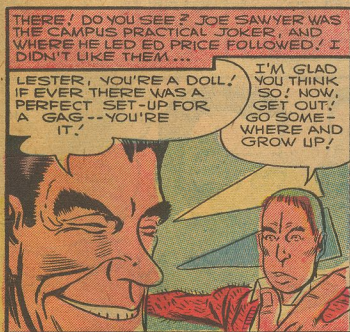
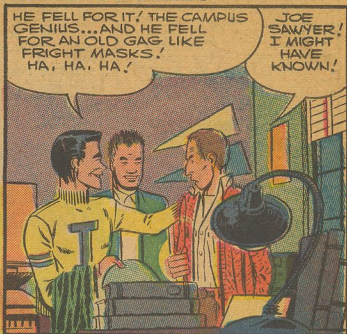
THE JEWELS... MARK, I DON'T UNDER-STAND!

NOR DO I! I ONLY KNOW THAT I FOUND THEM LIKE THIS! I GUESS SOMETHING JUST HAPPENS TO THEM WHEN THEY'RE TAKEN FROM THEIR OWN WORLD!

NO, HENDRIX DID NOT HEAR--AT LEAST HE WAS SPARED THAT...

I DON'T UNDER-STAND--ANY OF IT, MARTHA! BUT AT LEAST NOW NO ONE WILL EVER ENTER THAT OTHER WORLD AGAIN JUST TO GATHER UP JEWELS THAT GLITTER FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN TURN--TO DUST!

JOE SAWYER LOVED A PRACTICAL JOKE -- AND THIS ONE WAS A MASTERPIECE! BUT HE SHOULD HAVE MADE CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD HAVE....

The LAST LAUGH

NO, WAIT! I'M NO EXPERT--BUT THIS LOOKS AS IF IT MIGHT BE PRACTICAL! AND IF IT IS, WHY, IT WOULD BE WORTH A FORTUNE!

IT'S PRACTICAL, EXCEPT FOR A FEW DETAILS! BUT--WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

BECAUSE I'M NOT A FOOL! AND I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE A GENIUS WHEN IT COMES TO PHYSICS! THIS--I'D LIKE TO GET IN ON!
YOU? YOU'RE JOKING! THERE'D BE NO PROFIT IN IT! AT LEAST, NOT AT FIRST...

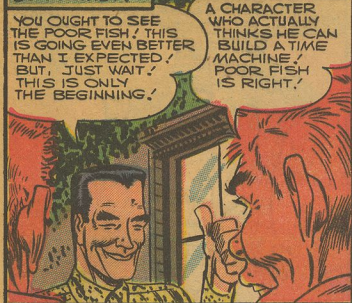
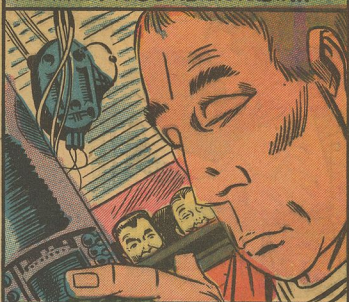
BUT THERE'D BE PLENTY, IN TIME! YOU SAY THE WORD, AND I'LL SUPPLY THE MONEY! I'LL EVEN WORK WITH YOU!
YES--I BELIEVE YOU WOULD, HMM--ALL RIGHT! IF YOU REALLY MEAN IT, WHY NOT?

I WAS SO BLIND! I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED THE TRUTH! BUT I'M NOT CLEVER ABOUT PEOPLE...
A TIME MACHINE! OKAY--I PLAYED ALONG AND KEPT QUIET! NOW, WHAT GOES ON? TIME TRAVEL! ARE YOU KIDDING?
YOU BET I AM! ONLY... THE GENIUS DOESN'T KNOW IT!

I GET A FAT ALLOWANCE! I CAN AFFORD TO PAY--FOR THE GREATEST GAG OF THE CENTURY! DON'T YOU SEE? IT'S PERFECT!
SO THAT'S IT--HE REALLY THINKS HE CAN BUILD THIS GADGET--SO WE PLAY ALONG! FOR LAUGHS! SAWYER, YOU'RE A GENIUS!

AFTERWARD, I WORKED! FOR WEEKS! AND I NEVER DREAMED WHY STUDENTS I KNEW KEPT DROPPING IN..
HI, LESTER! MIND IF I BORROW THIS?
SURE, SURE! GO AHEAD!

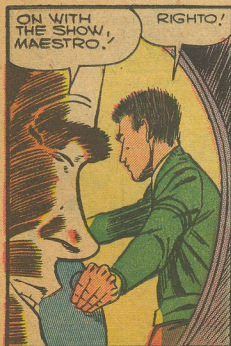
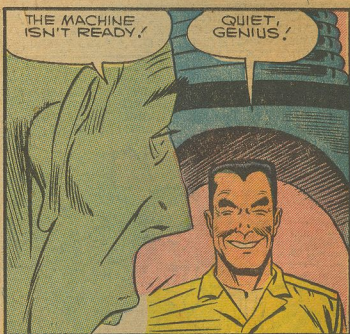
UH, LES... WE HAVE TO GO OUT FOR A WHILE! YOU DON'T NEED US, DO YOU? AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE BRAIN! MIND?
MIND? OF COURSE NOT! SEE YOU LATER!

BRAINS? ME? I WAS STUPID! I WORKED, BUT NOT THEY!
YOU OUGHT TO SEE THE POOR FISH! THIS IS GOING EVEN BETTER THAN I EXPECTED! BUT, JUST WAIT! THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING!
A CHARACTER WHO ACTUALLY THINKS HE CAN BUILD A TIME MACHINE! POOR FISH IS RIGHT!
AFTER A WHILE, I WORKED ALONE ALL THE TIME! AND I NEVER KNEW...

HOW COULD I KNOW? I WAS WORRIED! I COULDN'T MAKE THE MACHINE DO WHAT I WANTED IT TO DO! AND THEN, IT WAS TOO LATE...
JOE--ED! WHY THE CROWD?
WHY? THE SEMESTER ENDS IN TWO DAYS, LESTER! SO WE FIGURED TO WIND THINGS UP WITH A BANG!
THE TIME MACHINE LOOKS PRETTY COMPLETE TO ME--SO I FIGURED WE'D TEST IT!
AND WE BROUGHT AN AUDIENCE! AFTER ALL, YOU WANT THE WORLD TO KNOW WHAT YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED, DON'T YOU?

BUT THE MACHINE ISN'T COMPLETE! YOU'RE MAKING FUN OF ME!
US? NOW WHY WOULD WE DO THAT? YOU'VE GOT US ALL WRONG! WE'RE HERE TO HONOR YOU!

LET'S GET ON WITH IT, SHALL WE? NOW IS AS GOOD A TIME TO TEST THE TIME MACHINE AS ANY!
TEST? NO! I--I SEE IT ALL NOW! YOU'VE BEEN MAKING A FOOL OF ME--RIGHT FROM THE START!

I TRIED! I TRIED TO CONTROL MYSELF -- BUT THERE WAS TOO MUCH BITTERNESS INSIDE ME...

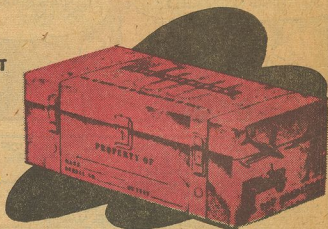
YOU...YOU INFANTS! THERE WILL BE NO TEST! THE MACHINE ISN'T READY! GET OUT!
UH-OH.. LOOKS LIKE THE GENIUS HAS HAD ENOUGH!

GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU FOOLS!

FOOLS? YES, THEY WERE FOOLS! BUT I WAS A BIGGER FOOL! THEY BLOCKED MY WAY, AND SAWYER ENJOYED HIMSELF...
AND NOW, ON WITH THE DEMONSTRATION!

OBSERVE, GENTLEMEN, MY ASSISTANT, ED PRICE, WILL WORK THE CONTROLS! AND I SHALL GO BACK IN TIME--IN THE WINK OF AN EYE!
NO!

THE MACHINE ISN'T READY!
QUIET, GENIUS!

ON WITH THE SHOW, MAESTRO!
RIGHTO!

SEE, GENTLEMEN, HOW SIMPLE IT IS TO TRAVEL IN TIME IF YOU KNOW HOW...

EACH FOOTLOCKER CONTAINS:

- 4 Tanks
- 4 Jeeps
- 4 Battleships
- 4 Cruisers
- 4 Sailors
- 4 Riflemen
- 8 Machinegunners
- 8 Sharpshooters
- 4 Infantrymen
- 8 Officers
- 8 Waves
- 8 Wacs
- 4 Bombers
- 4 Trucks
- 8 Jet Planes
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NO C.O.D.'s

HERE'S MY $1.25 !
Rush the TOY SOLDIERS TO ME!

Name ....

Address ....

City .... State ....

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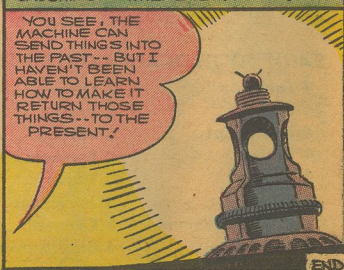
IT WAS ALL OVER IN SECONDS! I GOT TO THE CONTROLS THEN -- BUT IT WAS USELESS...

I TRIED -- BUT I COULDN'T STOP IT IN TIME...
HE'S GONE! JUST... LIKE THAT!
HE'S GONE TWO HUNDRED YEARS BACK IN TIME! THAT'S WHAT THE CONTROLS WERE SET FOR!

BACK IN... YOU IDIOT! YOU DIDN'T TELL US THE MACHINE WORKED!
YOU DIDN'T LET ME! IT WAS YOUR DOING!
ALL RIGHT! MAYBE IT WAS! BUT NOW BRING HIM BACK! HURRY!
I CAN'T!

THEY WEREN'T LAUGHING, THEN! NONE OF THEM! THEY WERE GRIM! BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE DONE...
YOU CAN'T? YOU MUST! YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE SAWYER -- SOMEWHERE IN THE PAST!
I HAVE NO CHOICE! I TOLD YOU -- THE MACHINE WASN'T READY! I STILL HAD THINGS TO WORK OUT!

THERE WAS NOTHING AT ALL TO BE DONE! NOT THEN! MAYBE, IN TIME, I'LL BE ABLE TO BRING SAWYER BACK! BUT MEANWHILE, I WONDER IF HE'S STILL LAUGHING -- WHEREVER HE IS?
YOU SEE, THE MACHINE CAN SEND THINGS INTO THE PAST -- BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE IT RETURN THOSE THINGS -- TO THE PRESENT!
END

TRACK THAT TRAIN

On that Thursday afternoon, the Skyrocket Express Freight train passed the station at Doversville. Station Agent Bill Winkers was on the platform. Next to him was a local farmer, Henry Kass. The sun hit the silvery Diesel Locomotive pulling a long line of freight cars. The engineer, Paul Bryne, waved a hand at the station agent.

"Now there's a man for you," remarked Bill Winkers. "Been at the throttle for almost thirty-five years. We were at a party together last week. Raising funds for a swimming pool for the kids. I asked Paul if he missed the old steam locomotives. He laughed and said this was progress. Bigger and better things and more to come. Seems he heard about the automatic engine they have been trying at the Freight Center. Starts, goes ahead, and stops all by itself."

The words were falling on deaf ears. Farmer Henry Kass was doing something he did when he was a kid. Counting the freight cars.

"Thirty-eight, thirty-nine, forty, and the caboose. Must be a fortune in all those cars," he half remarked to himself. "Which reminds me. I have to buy a set of electric trains for my nephew. His birthday is next week."

The next station after Doversville was Parker's Point, a distance of one hundred and ten miles. The S. K. & W. R. R. had only one track between these two points which was used mainly for freight as passenger traffic went on the main line. That one hundred and ten miles covered desert land, forest, and mountains. There were three rivers that were bridged.

At eight-thirty that night the freight train hadn't reached Parker's Point. Allen Marks was station agent and he was worried. For that delay meant only two things. Either a wreck on the line or perhaps an obstacle on the track that had halted the train. He followed procedures and started to call up headquarters when he suddenly remembered something. Why hadn't they cut into the telegraph line and sent him a message? That was the duty of James Hunt in the caboose. He sent his message and received his reply.

"Wrecking crew on its way. Go ahead to scene of probable accident on gas car." The message was authorized by the Superintendent of the S. K. & W. R. R. Allen Marks then reached for the phone and called up Dr. Peter Kane.

"Hello, Doc," he said. "This is Allen Marks. I think there has been a terrible accident along the line. The Skyrocket Express Freight train is long overdue. Jump into your car and come over. We'll use the gas car and see what happened."

Doctor Peter Kane was uncomfortable as he sat on the small chair on the gas car that comfortably seated only two people. The little flat car powered by a gas engine was making its top speed of forty miles an hour. Before he left, Allen Marks had sent a message to Doversville. The gas car pulled into the Doversville station with two perplexed agents facing each other.

"Where's the train?" demanded Allen Marks.

"Passed here at one ten this afternoon," replied Bill Winkers. "Look at my record sheet. Henry Kass was standing here as I waved to Paul Bryne. Now you ask me, where's the train? I saw it last."

At the end of the week the S. K. & W. R. R. knew it had a first class impossible mystery on its hand. An entire loaded freight train had vanished. The president of the R. R. talked to the head of his railroad police force.

"You have called in the state and federal authorities. You have checked the rivers. Where's that freight train? It didn't vanish into thin air. Somebody stole it! But why and how? And where are the two men of the engine crew and the three men in the caboose? I have contacted Dr. Ernest Scanon. He and his staff specialize in solving impossible mysteries. He expects you tomorrow afternoon at three o'clock. We will spare no expense to find that missing train."

Dr. Ernest Scanon smiled as he extended his hand to John Kuhn, head of the railroad police force of the S. K. & W. R. R.

"We will start in two days. I need some special equipment which I am getting from the Railroad Research Bureau. It should help us to solve the mystery. You will accompany us so we can make a quick decision as to what course of action to take."

Two days later another Diesel Engine pulled out of the Doversville Station. It carried a long steel

car wth only five windows. Inside the car, Dr. Ernest Scanon was explaining matters to John Kuhn.

"Actually this car contains a vibrograter which by means of vibrations can test railroad rails for defects. If a rail is defective, then it is removed and a sound one replaces it. Somehow that freight train was removed from the tracks. That means a section of track had to undergo a very unusual stress and stain. The operator has earphones. He can detect a change in the vibration pattern. There is also a graph recorder which does the same so we have a double check. Sit down and relax."

It is very easy to tell another person to take it easy or to relax. John Kuhn had something on his mind.

"We have been getting hundreds of letters from people suggesting how an entire freight train can vanish. One fellow mentioned that a spaceship from Mars lifted it up. Another said that the dwarfs from underneath the ground pulled it down."

"Not so far fetched as you think," laughed Dr. Ernest Scanon. "That missing freight train is somewhere between the top and the bottom of this earth."

"But more than all of that," continued John Kuhn, "is the missing engineer. He's my brother-in-law. A first rate fellow who has three fine kids. My sister is worried to death. Find him and find him alive, please."

For sixty-eight miles the Diesel Engine pulled the long steel car. Then Bernard Rucket, the vibrogater operator pushed a button. It was a signal to the engineer to reverse and go back over a section of track. When this had been accomplished he spoke to Dr. Ernest Scanon.

"You can start checking at this point. The strains and stresses are relatively new."

The Diesel Engine stopped and Dr. Ernest Scanon and the others left the train. They were facing a huge rocky mountain on the left side of the track. Back and forward they walked, with Dr. Ernest Scanon holding a graph sheet in his hand. Suddenly he stopped and examined the ground very carefully.

"The entire train is probably inside that mountain. Whoever THEY are, they stopped the train and boarded it. Then used a section of track as a cut-off right here. Leads inside that mountain. All we have to do is to find the entrance. We stay right here. Telegraph back for armed reinforcements. Get the president of the Railroad to find out if they ever tried to dig a tunnel through this mountain."

A hundred well armed deputies were outside the special railroad car that had brought them to the scene. The president of the railroad spoke to Dr. Ernest Scanon.

"In 1935 the S. K. & W. R. R. bought this stretch of track from the L. P. & T. R. R. In 1892 they tried to dig a tunnel through this mountain. It was to be the longest tunnel on this continent. About five miles. They blasted two miles of it and then quit. Sealed it up. New railroad routes made the continuance of the project economically unsound. I have with me the surveyor's map. We can blast open the seal."

Charges of dynamite were placed in position and wires strung along the ground. Suddenly a section of rock moved aside and two men with their hands up in the air walked up to the armed men.

"We surrender," said one of them. "The train is inside the tunnel. What a haul it would have been had we gotten away with it. Millions of dollars of stuff we could have sold abroad. The rest of the gang is inside. So is the train crew. They aren't hurt. We hadn't decided what to do with them."

The president of the R. R. handed Dr. Ernest Scanon a check.

"We certainly are well satisfied with your work in solving this mystery. The leader confessed everything. They stopped the Skyrocket Express Freight Train with a red light and then at gun point took the entire crew prisoners. Ran the train up to the side of the tunnel and used an extension track to get the train inside the tunnel. One thing just puzzles me. In your bill there is an item labeled "Special Discovery." Just what does it mean?"

There was a big smile on the face of the famous mystery solver.

"My men checked every inch of that tunnel. Seems that gang had blasted out a warehouse to hold the goods. The fools! There's gold inside that tunnel. It really is a gold mine. Since you have title to that tunnel, then your company now owns a gold mine."

The End

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF:

STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
Published Bimonthly at Derby, Conn., for September 28, 1955.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:
Publisher — Edward Levy, Woodbridge, Conn.
Editor and Managing Editor — Burton N. Lesky, Orange, Conn.
Business Manager — John Santangelo, Derby, Conn.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.)
Charlton Press, Inc., Charlton Building, Derby, Conn.
Edward Levy, Woodbridge, Conn.
John Santangelo, Derby, Conn.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.)
None.

4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

BURTON N. LESKY, Editor

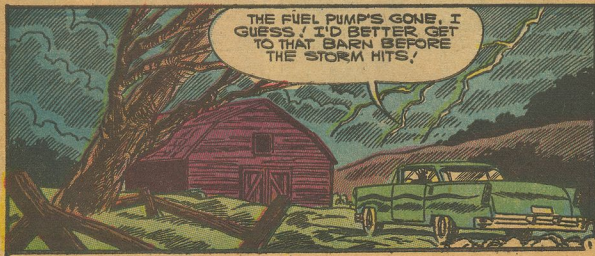
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 19th day of September, 1955.
(SEAL)
Edward A. Hand (Notary Public)
(My commission expires April 1, 1959)

ROBERT HINES SOLD FARM MACHINERY, AND HE WAS SAVING TO GET MARRIED! JUST A TYPICAL, MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL YOUNG FELLOW TO ALL APPEARANCES! YET THERE WERE BULLETINS BEARING HIS PICTURE IN ALL LAW OFFICES AND AN INTENSE MANHUNT ON THAT ENDED IN A HAYFIELD WHERE A MAN KNOWN AS ROBERT HINES WENT DOWN UNDER A HAIL OF POLICE BULLETS! COULD THIS BE REAL -- OR WAS IT A ...

NIGHTMARE

NO! DON'T SHOOT! THEY THINK THAT'S ME THEY'RE SHOOTING AT!

WE GAVE HINES HIS CHANCE! GET HIM BEFORE HE GETS ONE OF US!

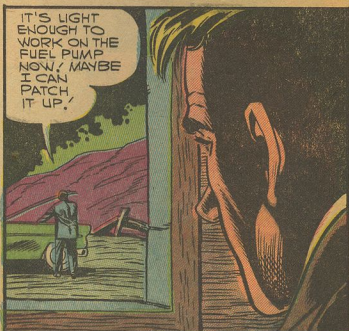
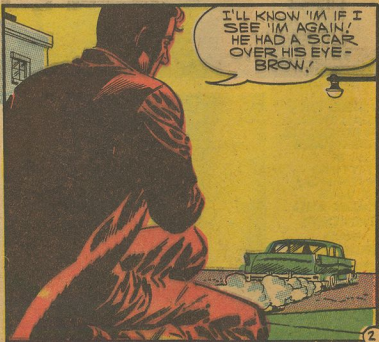
HINES BEGAN THIS PARTICULAR NIGHTMARE ON A FITTING EVENING! IT WAS DARK AND THUNDER WAS RUMBLING JUST AS HIS CAR SPUTTERED OUT...

HINES FOUND A DRY SPOT AND PREPARED TO SPEND THE NIGHT! THE ONLY LIGHT CAME FROM THE WIERD FLASHES OF LIGHTNING...

THE NIGHTMARE SEEMED TO BEGIN THEN! HINES TOSSED, DREAMING THAT THERE WAS SOMEONE NEARBY...
WHAT A RESEMBLANCE! GIVES ME AN IDEA! HE DON'T NEED ALL THE IDENTIFICATION HE'S CARRIN'!

HINES WAS TIRED -- SO TIRED THAT IT TOOK A LONG TIME FOR THE NIGHTMARE TO AWAKEN HIM...
FUNNY! DREAMED THAT SOMEONE WAS TUGGING AT MY WALLET! OH, WELL, IT'LL BE LIGHT SOON!

IT'S LIGHT ENOUGH TO WORK ON THE FUEL PUMP NOW! MAYBE I CAN PATCH IT UP!

LATER, IN TOWN...
HELP! IT'S A HOLD... UGH!

I'LL KNOW 'IM IF I SEE 'IM AGAIN! HE HAD A SCAR OVER HIS EYEBROW!

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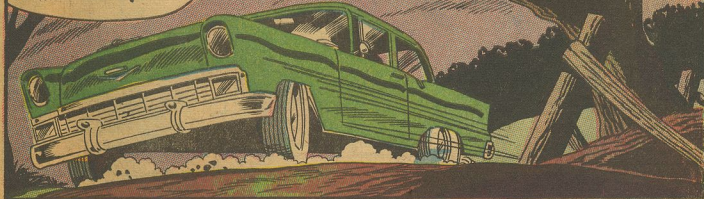
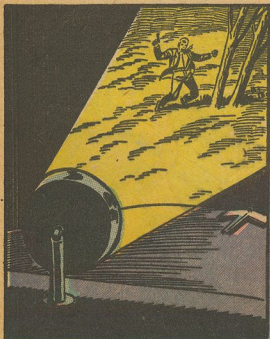
THAT CROOK MUST BE DESPERATE! HE'S SHOOTING AT ME AND CHASING ME! GOT TO GET AWAY!

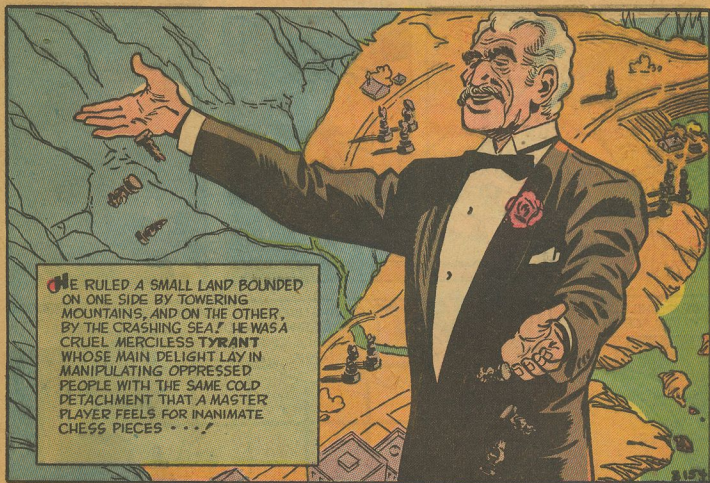
HINES THOUGHT IT WAS A HOLD-UP--THEN HE SAW THE BLINKING RED LIGHT! HE'D FOUGHT WITH A DETECTIVE...
THEY'LL SHOOT ME IF I STOP NOW! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY! I CAN CLEAR THIS UP LATER!

DRIVING LIKE A MADMAN, HE TURNED ON THE RADIO, AND THEN HE KNEW HE WAS IN REAL TROUBLE!
THE FUGITIVE CALLS HIMSELF ROBERT HINES BUT HE IS KNOWN TO THE POLICE AS NICK BOLTON! HE IS ARMED AND DANGEROUS!

I LOST THEM! I'VE GOT TO HOLE UP SOMEWHERE! I KNOW, THE BARN WHERE I HAD THAT DREAM! THEY WON'T FIND ME THERE!

PERFECT! THE POLICE WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE WIPING THEIR SEARCH FOR NICK BOLTON OFF THEIR BOOKS!

HOLD IT, HINES! IF YUH GOT ANYTHING TUH SAY BEFORE THE POLICE GET HERE, MAKE IT FAST! I HEARD 'EM TURNIN' OFF THE MAIN ROAD JUST NOW!
I WASN'T DREAMING THAT NIGHT I SLEPT HERE! IT WAS YOU GOING THROUGH MY POCKETS! YOU... YOU LOOK JUST LIKE ME!

HINES SCRAMBLED AWAY INTO THE DARK-NESS! AND BOLTON KNEW TIME WAS GROW-ING SHORT! HE RAN TO A SIDE DOOR AND STARTED ACROSS THE FIELD! IT WAS PITCH BLACK-- BUT SUDDENLY...

STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES

CHECKMATE

HE RULED A SMALL LAND BOUNDED ON ONE SIDE BY TOWERING MOUNTAINS, AND ON THE OTHER, BY THE CRASHING SEA! HE WAS A CRUEL MERCILESS **TYRANT** WHOSE MAIN DELIGHT LAY IN MANIPULATING OPPRESSED PEOPLE WITH THE SAME COLD DETACHMENT THAT A MASTER PLAYER FEELS FOR INANIMATE CHESS PIECES . . . !

BAH -- I HAVE KNOWN THAT FOR MONTHS! . . . THERE IS ONLY ONE THING I DO NOT KNOW -- AND THAT IS **WHO** THEIR LEADER IS! HE IS THE ONE MAN WHO KEEPS SLIPPING THROUGH MY FINGERS! . . SO LET THE FOOLS KEEP CONSPIRING . . . SOONER OR LATER, THEY WILL LEAD ME TO **HIM**!

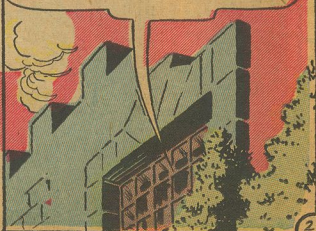
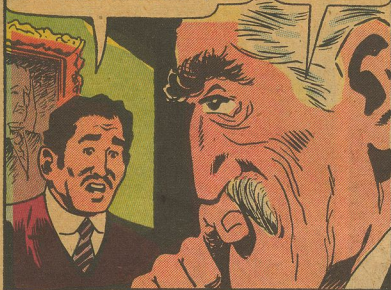
THE TYRANT HAD A CRUEL SENSE OF HUMOR, AND HE HAD SET ASIDE THIS DAY AS A NATIONAL HOLIDAY IN HONOR OF HIMSELF--WHEN THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE WOULD BE FORCED TO ACCLAIM HIM FOR HAVING ENSLAVED THEM! AND NOW PREPARATIONS WERE BEING MADE FOR THE GRAND PARADE....

NOT FAR FROM THE POINT WHERE THE PARADE WAS TO START, A MAN STOOD WAITING---A MAN WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN A VERY SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT BY THE MYSTERIOUS LEADER OF THE NEW LIBERATION COMMITTEE!

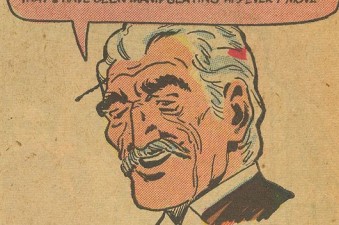
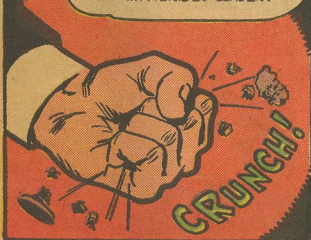
JUST ONE MORE HOUR...AND THE TYRANT WILL COME RIDING BY! JUST ONE MORE HOUR...AND OUR LAND WILL BE FREED!

MEANWHILE, AT THE PALACE --
SIR, THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE'S ASSASSIN IS UNDER SURVEILLANCE BY OUR AGENTS!
EXCELLENT..!

THE FOOL IS WAITING FOR ME TO COME RIDING BY! HE PLANS TO SPRING OUT OF THE ALLEY, BREAK THROUGH THE CORDON OF GUARDS, LEAP ONTO THE RUNNING-BOARD OF MY LIMOUSINE--AND THEN STRIKE HIS BLOW FOR FREEDOM!... THE FOOL DOESN'T DREAM..

...THAT I KNOW EVERY JOT AND TITTLE OF THE PLOT!...HMPF--THEY ARE ALL PAWNS, ALL OF THEM EXCEPT THE LEADER WHO KEEPS SLIPPING THROUGH MY FINGERS...AND I AM THEIR MASTER! THEY ARE MOVED ACROSS THE BOARD OF LIFE BY MY HAND ONLY...!

BUT, SIR--THE MAN OUT THERE IS AN ACCOMPLISHED ASSASSIN! SHOULDN'T WE APPREHEND HIM BEFORE--?
SHHHH--
I AM THINKING--

...IN THE DUNGEON BELOW THE CASTLE, LIES THE INFORMER WHO REVEALED TO ME EVERY DETAIL BUT ONE OF THE PLOT! AND THAT SINGLE DETAIL IS THE IDENTITY OF THE COMMITTEE'S LEADER WHO PERSONALLY GAVE THE ASSASSIN HIS ASSIGNMENT!... I WANT THE INFORMER BROUGHT UP HERE AT ONCE!

WHY WAS I THROWN INTO THE DUNGEON? WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME? Y-YOU PROMISED IF I REVEALED THE PLAN, YOU'D--
HMMMM--YES...JUST AS I THOUGHT. HE IS AS TALL AS I AM...HE HAS THE SAME BUILD TOO! NOW IF WE COULD ONLY MAKE HIS FACE APPEAR EXACTLY LIKE MINE...

WE COULD LET HIM LEAD THE PARADE IN MY PLACE! HE WOULD BE THE ONE ELIMINATED BY THE ASSASSIN! ...AHHH, I CAN SEE IT ALL NOW--THE ASSASSIN MAD WITH JOY, CERTAIN THAT HE HAS STRUCK THE FINAL BLOW FOR FREEDOM! AND WHEN HE LEARNS WITH BRUTAL SUDDENNESS THAT I AM STILL ALIVE... THAT I HAVE BEEN MANIPULATING HIS EVERY MOVE...

HIS SPIRIT WILL BE CRUSHED!... AND THEN IT WILL BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO GET FROM HIM THE IDENTITY OF THE MAN WHO HAS ELUDED ME SO LONG-- THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE'S MYSTERIOUS LEADER!
CRUNCH!

B-BUT YOU PROMISED--!
HAVE A SEDATIVE ADMINISTERED TO THE WRETCH. HIS WHIMPERING OFFENDS ME.

FOR FIVE SLOW-DRAGGING MINUTES, THE MAKE-UP ARTIST SCRUTINIZED THE FACES OF THE INFORMER AND THE CRUEL TYRANT--AND DURING ALL THAT TIME HE SAID NOTHING. THEN--

AND SO THE SMALL LAND BOUNDED ON ONE SIDE BY TOWERING MOUNTAINS, AND ON THE OTHER BY THE CRASHING SEA, WAS FREE AT LAST! FOR PEREZ HIMSELF HAD BEEN THE MYSTERIOUS LEADER! AND PEREZ, USING HIS ART IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM, HAD CHECKMATED THE TYRANT!!

THE END.

PUNCHY PETE

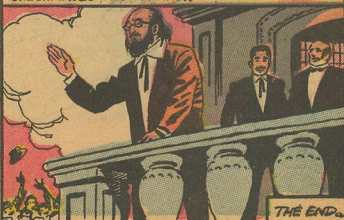
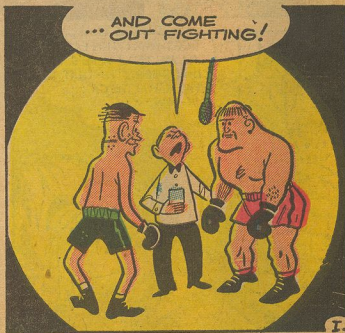
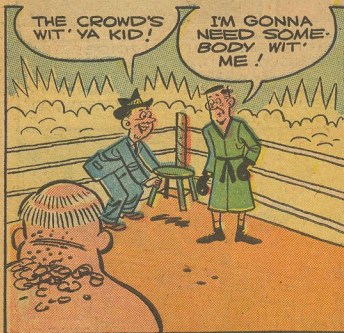
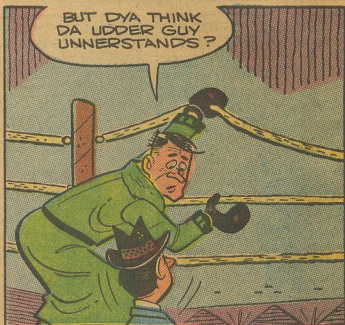
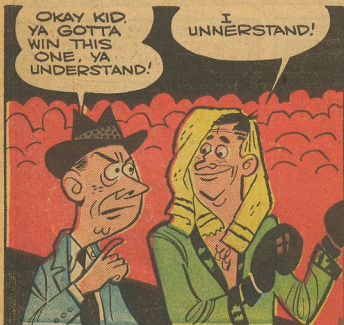
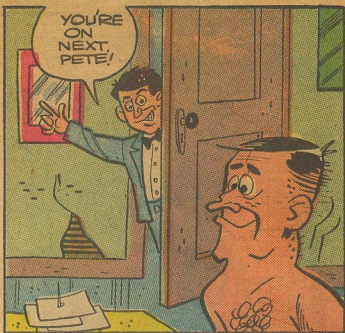
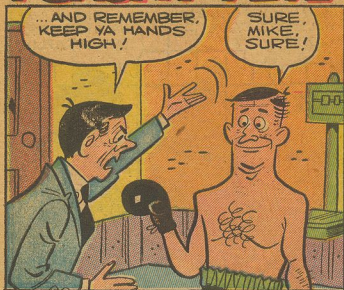
...AND REMEMBER, KEEP YA HANDS HIGH!
SURE, MIKE, SURE!

YOU'RE ON NEXT, PETE!

OKAY KID. YA GOTTA WIN THIS ONE. YA UNDERSTAND!
I UNNERSTAND!

BUT DYA THINK DA UDDER GUY UNNERSTANDS?

THE CROWD'S WIT' YA KID!
I'M GONNA NEED SOMEBODY WIT' ME!

...AND COME OUT FIGHTING!

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GO GET 'IM KID!

HE DON'T UNNERSTAND!

LET 'IM HAVE IT, PETE!
BE GLAD TO, IF 'E DON'T TAKE IT FOIST!

WHY DON'T YA MAKE UP YOUR MIND...

...I COULDA STAYED DOWN THE FOIST TIME!

YA GOTTA KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, KID!
I DIDN'T CLOSE 'EM.. 'E DID!

USE YOUR RIGHT!
I BEEN USIN' IT... TA STOP MY FALLS!
BONG!

WOT I EVER DO TA YOU?

OKAY KID, WE'LL GET A REMATCH...

... AND YOU'LL KILL THE BUM!

YEAH, IF ONLY 'ED LET 'ME STAND UP I'D MOIDER 'IM!
END

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